

PATENT
Attorney Docket No. 944-003.134-2

IN THE UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE

PATENT APPLICATION

of

Toni ÖSTERGÅRD,

Seppo SALMINEN

and Jaakko NOUSIAINEN

for a

DOUBLE -SIDED KEYBOARD FOR USE IN AN ELECTRONIC DEVICE

Express Mail Label # EV 252883375 US

DOUBLE-SIDED KEYBOARD FOR USE IN AN ELECTRONIC DEVICE

This is a Continuation-In-Part application of co-pending U.S. parent application Serial No. 09/702,539, entitled "Double-sided Keyboard Having Two Keymats and One Activation Mat", filed October 31, 2000 and assigned to the assignee of the present invention.

Field of the Invention

The present invention relates generally to a keyboard in an electronic device and, more particularly, to a double-sided keyboard having two keymats, or two sets of individual keys, located on both sides of the keyboard for entering information into an electronic device.

Background of the Invention

Man-machine interaction, in terms of user input, is of utmost importance in portable communication devices. Splitting up one single keyboard into two or more sub-keyboards is one of the ways to improve the efficient use of a communication device. For example, in a Communicator, a phone keyboard can be used when the Communicator functions as a telephone, and another separate QWERTY keyboard can be used when the Communicator is used for other functions. As portable communication devices become smaller and more compact, the available space and volume for two or more sub-keyboards becomes more limited.

It is desirable to provide a cost-effective method and apparatus for entering information in an electronic device depending on the functions of the device.

25

Summary of the Invention

According to the first aspect of the present invention, there is provided a double-sided keyboard for entering information in an electronic device. The keyboard comprises:
a circuit board having a first side and an opposing second side;
30 a first plurality of keys adjacent to the first side;
a second plurality of keys adjacent to the second side; and

a plurality of electrically conductive members disposed on the first side of the circuit board so that when at least one of the keys is pressed, at least one electrically conductive member is operatively connected to the circuit board for providing a signal indicative of the information for use in the electronic device.

5 Preferably, the electrically conductive members comprise a plurality of dome-shaped segments for making electrical contact with the circuit board to activate the circuit board for providing the signals.

10 Possibly, the dome-shaped segments are shared with the first and second plurality of keys such that each dome-shaped segment can be caused to make electrical contact with the circuit board by either one of the first plurality of keys or one of the second plurality of keys.

15 Alternatively, the electrically conductive members comprise a first plurality of dome-shaped segments for making electrical contact with the circuit board to activate the circuit board by pressing one of the first plurality of keys; and a second plurality of dome-shaped segments for making electrical contact with the circuit board to activate the circuit board by pressing one of the second plurality of keys.

20 Preferably, the first plurality of keys are capable of activating the circuit board only when the keyboard is oriented in a first direction, and the second plurality of keys are capable of activating the circuit board only when the keyboard is oriented in a second direction different from the first direction.

Preferably, the first plurality of keys are positioned above the circuit board when the keyboard is oriented in the first direction, and the second plurality of keys are positioned above the circuit board when the keyboard is oriented in the second direction.

25 Possibly, the electronic device comprises a device body having a device connector and the circuit board comprises a circuit connector for electrically connecting to the device connector for conveying the signal from the keyboard to the device body.

Possibly, the circuit connector is removable from the device connector so as to allow the keyboard to be detached from the device body.

30 According to the present invention, the electrically conductive members are fixedly attached to the circuit board, or they are disposed on a mat disposed between the

first plurality of keys and the circuit board.

According to the present invention, the first plurality of keys are individually disposed or they are part of a keymat. Likewise, the second plurality of keys are individually disposed or they are part of a further keymat.

5 Preferably, the electrically conductive members comprise a plurality of dome-shaped segments for making electrical contact with the circuit board to activate the circuit board for providing the signal.

According to the second aspect of the present invention, there is provided an electronic device including a device body having a body direction facing a user to allow 10 the user to enter information in the electronic device, the electronic device comprising:

a device connector disposed on the device body; and
a double-sided keyboard for entering the information, the keyboard having a first side and an opposing second side, the keyboard comprising:

15 a circuit connector;
a circuit electrically connected to the circuit connector;
a first user interface having a plurality of keys disposed on the first side of the keyboard;

20 a plurality of dome-shaped segments disposed between the keys and the circuit, wherein when at least one of the keys is pressed, at least one of the dome-shaped segments is deformed, causing the first user interface to interact with the circuit for providing signals indicative of the information;

25 a second user interface disposed on the second side of the keyboard and capable of interacting with the circuit for providing the signals, wherein the circuit connector is electrically connected to the device connector for conveying the signals from the keyboard to the device body when the keyboard is attached to the device body, and the keyboard can be attached to the device body either

in a first position such that the first side is oriented in a direction substantially the same as the device direction so as to allow the user to enter the information via the first user interface, or

30 in a second position such that the second side is oriented in a direction

substantially the same as the device orientation so as to allow the user to enter the information via the second user interface.

Preferably, the second user interface comprises a plurality of further keys, and wherein the further keys cause the circuit to make contact with the dome-shaped segments for providing the signals when at least one of the further keys is pressed, and the dome-shaped segments are electrically conductive for causing the circuit to provide the signals when the deformed dome-shaped segment electrically contacts the circuit.

Alternatively, the second user interface comprises a touch surface which causes the circuit to provide the signals when pressure is asserted at a location of the touch surface.

Possibly, the dome-shaped segments are electrically non-conductive, and when at least one of the keys is pressed, the pressed key asserts the pressure to the touch surface through the deformed dome-shaped segment.

According to the third aspect of the present invention, there is provided a double-sided keyboard removably attached to an electronic device to allow a user to enter information in the electronic device, the keyboard comprising:

a first side and an opposing second side;
a circuit connector;
a circuit electrically connected to the circuit connector;
a first user interface having a plurality of keys disposed on the first side of the keyboard;

a plurality of dome-shaped segments disposed between the keys and the circuit, wherein when at least one of the keys is pressed, at least one of the dome-shaped segments is deformed, causing the first user interface to interact with the circuit for providing signals indicative of the information;

a second user interface different from the first user interface, disposed on the second side of the keyboard, and capable of interacting with the circuit for providing the signals, wherein the circuit connector is electrically connected to the device connector for conveying the signals from the keyboard to the device body when the keyboard is attached to the device body.

Preferably, the second user interface comprises a plurality of further keys, and wherein the further keys cause the circuit to make contact with the dome-shaped segments for providing the signals when at least one of the further keys is pressed. The dome-shaped segments are electrically conductive for causing the circuit to provide the signals 5 when the deformed dome-shaped segment electrically contacts the circuit.

Alternatively, the second user interface comprises a touch surface, which causes the circuit to provide the signals when pressure is asserted at a location of the touch surface.

Possibly, the dome-shaped segments are electrically non-conductive. When at 10 least one of the keys is pressed, the pressed key asserts the pressure to the touch surface through the deformed dome-shaped segment.

The present invention will become apparent upon reading the description taken in conjunction with Figures 1a to 10c.

15 **Brief Description of the Drawings**

Figure 1a is a diagrammatic representation illustrating a portable electronic device having a set of keys on its cover.

Figure 1b is a diagrammatic representation illustrating the same electronic device with the cover being opened to expose another set of keys.

20 Figure 2a is a diagrammatic representation illustrating a communication device having a set of keys on its cover.

Figure 2b is a diagrammatic representation illustrating the same communication device with the cover being opened to expose another set of keys.

25 Figure 3a is a cross sectional view illustrating the double-sided keyboard of the present invention, wherein the keys on both sides of the keyboard share the same activation devices in order to activate the circuit board.

Figure 3b is a cross-sectional view illustrating the double-sided keyboard, wherein the keys on the two sides of the keyboard use different activation devices to active the circuit board.

30 Figure 3c is a cross-sectional view illustrating the double-sided keyboard, wherein

some keys on both sides of the keyboard use the same activation devices but some keys use different activation devices to activate the circuit board.

Figure 3d is a cross-sectional view illustrating the double-sided keyboard of the present invention, wherein the keys on both sides of the keyboard share the same activation devices in order to activate a connection area integrated into a keymat.
5

Figure 3e is a cross-sectional view illustrating the double-sided keyboard, wherein the keys on both sides of the keyboard use different activation devices to activate a connection area integrated into a keymat.

Figure 3f is a cross-sectional view illustrating the double-sided keyboard, wherein 10 some keys on both sides of the keyboard use the same activation devices but some keys use different activation devices to activate a connection area integrated into a keymat.

Figure 4a is a cross-sectional view illustrating two keys, which share a common activation device.

Figure 4b is a cross-sectional view illustrating the activation of the circuit board 15 by pressing the key on one side of the keyboard, wherein the keys on both sides share the same activation devices.

Figure 4c is a cross-sectional view illustrating the activation of the circuit board by pressing the key on the other side of the keyboard, wherein the keys on both sides share the same activation devices.

20 Figure 4d is a cross-sectional view illustrating the activation of the circuit board by pressing a key on either side of the keyboard, wherein the keys on different sides use different activation devices.

Figure 5 is a schematic diagram illustrating the principle of activating the circuit board.

25 Figure 6a is a diagrammatic representation of an electronic device having a switching mechanism to define a keyboard mode when the cover is closed.

Figure 6b is a diagrammatic representation of the same electronic device, as illustrated in Figure 6a, wherein the switching mechanism defines another keyboard mode when the cover is open.

30 Figure 6c is a diagrammatic representation of the same electronic device, as

illustrated in Figure 6a, wherein a directional switch is used to further define the keyboard modes.

Figure 7a is a diagrammatic representation of an electronic device having a keyboard as an extended portion of the electronic device.

5 Figure 7b is a diagrammatic representation of another electronic device having a keyboard as an extended portion of the electronic device.

Figure 8a is a diagrammatic representation showing a removable keyboard having two different user interfaces, according to the present invention.

10 Figure 8b is a diagrammatic representation showing an electronic device having a device body for placing a removable keyboard, according to the present invention.

Figure 8c is a diagrammatic representation showing the electronic device having thereon the double-sided keyboard, according to the present invention.

Figure 8d is a diagrammatic representation showing the electronic device of Figure 8c, wherein a different user interface is used for entering information.

15 Figure 9a is a top view showing an electronic device having an exemplary user interface.

Figure 9b is a top view showing the electronic device of Figure 9a with a different user interface.

20 Figure 10a is a cross-sectional view showing yet another double-sided keyboard, according to the present invention.

Figure 10b is a cross-sectional view showing still another double-sided keyboard, according to the present invention.

Figure 10c is top view showing the electronic device of Figure 9a with yet another user interface.

25

Detailed Description of the Invention

Figures 1a and 1b illustrate a portable electronic device 100, such as a personal digital assistant, which has a device body 102 and a cover 104. When the cover 104 is in a closed position, it exposes a set of first keys 12, as shown in Figure 1a. When the cover 104 is in an open position, it exposes a different set of second keys 22, as shown in Figure

1b. The device body 102 has a display 106 to show information to the user. It is understood that the cover 104 is electrically connected to the device body 102 for allowing the keys 12 and 22 to provide signals to the device body 102 for use in the device 100.

5 Figures 2a and 2b illustrate a communication device 110, such as a communicator device, which includes a phone keyboard having a plurality of first keys 12, and a larger keyboard, such as a QWERTY keyboard, having a plurality of second keys 22. The communication device 110 has a display 122 to be used as a phone display when the cover 112 is in a closed position, as shown in Figure 2a. The communication device 110 10 also has another display 124 on the device body 114 to be used when the cover 112 is an open position, as shown in Figure 2b. It is understood that the cover 112 is electrically connected to the device body 114 for allowing the keys 12 and 22 to provide signals to the device body 114 for use in the device 110.

15 As shown in Figures 1a to 2b, the first keys 12 and the second keys 22 are located on different sides of the cover 112. Preferably, the key functions of the first keys 12 are different from the key functions of the second keys 22. For example, the first keys 12 include number keys 0 to 9, a star key (*), and a pound sign (#), and the second keys 22 include alphabetic keys. However, it is also possible that some or all of the first keys 12 have the same key functions as those of the corresponding second keys 22.

20 Figures 3a – 3c are cross-sectional views of the double-sided keyboard 1 of the present invention. The double-sided keyboard 1 can be used on the cover 104 of the electronic device 100, as shown in Figures 1a and 1b, or the cover 112 of the communication device 110, as shown in Figures 2a and 2b. As shown in Figures 3a - 3c, the double-sided keyboard 1 includes a circuit board 50 having a first side 52 and an opposing second side 54. Preferably, the circuit board 50 is a flexible printed circuit board (PCB), printed wire board (PWB), or a flexible connector arrangement, having electrical connection pads 60 for reading the key input on the first side 52. Flexible connector arrangements and electrical connection pads 60 are well known in the art and are not part of the present invention. On the first side 52 of the circuit board 50, a plurality of dome-shaped, electrically conductive pads 44, is provided to make electrical

contact with the electrical connection pads 60 on the circuit board 50 so as to produce electrical signals. The dome-shaped, electrically conductive pads 44 can be individually and directly disposed on the circuit board 50, as shown in Figures 4a -4d. The individual pads 44 can be attached to the circuit board 50 with glues, tapes or by soldering, welding, or any other known attachment techniques. Alternatively, the electrically conductive pads 44 are produced on a dome-sheet or activation mat 40, as shown in Figure 3a - 3f. The first keys 12 and second keys 22 can be individually keys, which are not physically linked to each other. However, the first keys 12 can be physically linked to each other by a first keymat 10, which is placed on top of the activation mat 40, as shown in Figures 3a-3c.

5 Likewise, the second keys can be physically linked to each other by a second keymat 20, which is placed below the activation mat 40, as shown in Figure 3a-3c. An actuator 30 is provided under each first key 12 so that when the first key 12 is pressed towards the circuit board 50, the corresponding dome-shaped, electrically conductive contact pad 44 is depressed by the actuator 30, causing the contact pad 44 to make electrical contact with

10 the corresponding electrical connection pad 60 (See Figure 4b, where the electrical connection pad is represented by terminals 62, 64). Optionally, a mat cover 72 is provided over the first keymat 10 to physically isolate one first key 12 from another.

15 Likewise, when a second key 22 is pressed towards the circuit board 50, the dome-shaped, electrically conductive contact pad 44 is depressed by a corresponding actuator 30,

20 causing the contact pad 44 to make electrical contact with the corresponding electrical connection pad 60 (See Figure 4c, where the electrical connection pad is represented by terminals 62, 64). Moreover, a mat cover 74 is provided over the second keymat 20 to physically isolate one second key 22 from another. Preferably, one or both of the mat covers 72 and 74 can also serve as a mechanical support to the whole keyboard

25 arrangement, especially if individualy keys 12, 22 are used instead of the keymats 10 and 20.

Figure 3a shows a double-side keyboard 1, wherein the first keys 12 share the same dome-shaped, electrically conductive contact pads 44 with the corresponding second keys 22. Figure 3b shows a double-sided keyboard 1, wherein the first keys 12 use different dome-shaped, electrically conductive contact pads 44 from the second keys 22.

Figure 3c shows a double-sided keyboard 1, wherein some of the second keys 22 of the second keymat 20 share the same conductive pads 44 with the first keys 12 of the first keymat 10, and some of the second keys 22 use separate conductive pads 44.

Figures 3d – 3f are cross-sectional views of the double-sided keyboard 1' of the present invention. The double-sided keyboard 1' can be used on the cover 104 of the electronic device 100, as shown in Figures 1a and 1b, or the cover 112 of the communication device 110, as shown in Figures 2a and 2b. The double-sided keyboard 1' is essentially the same as the double-sided keyboard 1, as shown in Figures 3a – 3c, except that the electrical connection pad 60 (See Figure 4c, where the electrical connection pad is represented by terminals 62, 64) and the necessary connection circuitry are integrated to the second keymat 20'. Thus, the second keymat 20' also functions as a keyboard similar to the circuit board 50 as shown in Figures 3a – 3c.

Figures 4a to 4c are cross-sectional views illustrating the activation of the circuit board by pressing a first key 12 or a second key 22, wherein the keys on both sides of the keyboard share the same activation devices. For illustrative purposes, the connection pad 60 on the circuit board 50 is represented by two conductive terminals 62, 64 provided under each dome-shaped, electrically conductive contact pad 44. It is preferred that a base support 32 is provided between the second key 22 and the circuit board 50 in the area around the terminals 62, 64. When the contact pad 44 is remote from the terminals 62, 64, as shown in Figure 4a, the terminals 62, 64 act like an open switch. When the first key 12 is pressed towards the circuit board 50 along a direction denoted by an arrow 92 from its original position shown in phantom, the actuator 30 depresses the dome-shaped, electrically conductive contact pad 44 into contact with the terminals 62, 64, as shown in Figure 4b. The terminals 62, 64 act like a closed switch, wherein the terminals 62, 64 are electrically connected. Figure 4c shows that the terminals 62, 64 can also be electrically connected when the second key 22 is pressed toward the circuit board 50 along a direction denoted by an arrow 94 from its original position, shown in phantom. As shown in Figure 4c, as the second key 22 is pressed along the direction 94, the base support 32 distorts the flexible circuit board 50. The distorted circuit board 50, in turn, pushes the activation mat 40 towards the first keymat 10, depressing the dome-shaped, contact pad 44 into contact

with the terminals 62, 64.

Figure 4d illustrates the activation of the circuit board 50 by pressing either a first key 12 on the first keymat 10 or a second key 22 on the second keymat 20, wherein the keys 12, 22 use different contact pads 44.

5 In order to physically isolate the action of one dome-shaped contact pad 44 from another, it is possible to provide a plurality of spacers 34, as shown in Figures 4a - 4d.

Figure 5 is a schematic diagram illustrating the principle of activating the circuit board 50 involving the terminals 62, 64. As shown, the terminals 62, 64 act like a switch, which can be closed with the electrically conductive contact 44. For example, the 10 terminal 62 is connected to the electrical ground G and the terminal 64 is connected to an output terminal O, which is connected to a voltage source having a voltage level V through a resistor R. When the terminals 62, 64 are not shorted by the contact 44, the voltage at the output terminal O is equal to or slightly lower than V. However, when the terminals 62, 64 are electrically connected to each other by the contact 44, the output 15 terminal O is electrically grounded. Thus, when the contact 44 is caused to make contact with the terminals 62, 64, it provides a signal 130 indicative of the voltage change at the output terminal O.

It should be noted that the connector arrangement on the circuit board 50, as shown in Figures 3a-3c and 4a-4d, is shared by both the first keymat 10 and the second 20 keymat 20, but it is preferred that the key functions of the keymat 10 and the keymat 20 are not the same. Because the same activation mat 40, or the like, can be pressed on either side thereof, the electronic circuitry in the electronic device that uses the keyboard 1 should be able to recognize which one of the keymats 10, 12 is being used. As shown in Figure 6a, it is possible to install in the electronic device 100 a contact switch 130 which 25 is operatively connected to the cover 104 and the device body 102. The switch 130 is operable at two different states (open and closed, for example) such that when the cover 104 is closed, as shown in Figures 1a and 6a, the keyboard 1 (Figures 3a - 4d) functions in accordance with the input from the first keys 12 of the first keymat 10. However, when the cover 104 is open, as shown in Figures 1b and 6b, the keyboard 1 functions in 30 accordance with the input from second keys 22 of the second keymat 20. It is well-known

that a mobile phone that has a phone cover uses an active flip or the like to connect and disconnect a phone call. A similar device can be used for the switch 130.

It is also possible to install on the cover 104 a device 132 similar to a tilt switch or a gravity-sensitive switch, as shown in Figures 6b and 6c, which can sense the direction of 5 the cover 104 regarding the gravity. With such a switch, the keyboard 1 can function differently when the first keymat 10 is facing upward as opposed to when the second keymat 20 is facing upward. It is possible to choose the active side by user selection.

If different detection areas are used for the first side and the second side, the pressed side and the key are clearly defined.

10 In Figures 1a, 1b, 6a – 6c, the double-sided keyboard 1 or 1' is implemented on a cover of an electronic device. It is possible that the double-sided keyboard 1 or 1' is a non-movable part of an electronic device 120 or 122, as shown in Figures 7a and 7b. As shown in Figure 7a, the double-sided keyboard is an extended portion 105 of the device body 102 of the electronic device 120, which includes a display 106. As shown in Figure 15 7b, the double-sided keyboard is an extended portion 105 of the device body 103 of the electronic device 122, which has two displays 106 and 107 corresponding to the keymats 10 and 12.

It should be noted that, as shown in Figures 4a -5, the dome-shaped contact pad 44 is electrically conductive so that when the contact pad 44 makes contact with the 20 terminals 62, 64, it electrically connects the terminals. However, it is not necessary for the contact pad 44 to be electrically conductive and for it to physically make contact with the terminals 62, 64 in order to activate the circuit board 50. For example, the contact pad 44 can be a poor electrical conductor, but it can cause a change in the capacitance between the terminals 62, 64 when it is in close proximity to the terminals 62, 64. This 25 capacitance change can, in turn, cause a frequency change in a signal or other electrical characteristics of the signal in the circuit board 50. The activation mat 40 can be made of a variety of materials. For example, it can be made of a non-conductive material and then made conductive by a flexible metal coating; it can be made from an inherently conductive polymer membrane such as polyacetylene, or it can be made of a polymer 30 matrix embedded with a conductive filler, such as carbon or other metallic particles. It is

also possible that only the underside of the dome-shaped contact pad 44 is made conductive by having a flexible, conductive epoxy adhesive provided thereon, while the rest of the activation mat 40 is electrically non-conductive. Furthermore, the resistor R in Figure 5 can be the same in all keys 12, 22, but it can be different in different keys.

5 The double-sided keyboard, according to the present invention, can be detached from the electronic device. As shown in Figure 8a, the double-side keyboard 200 has thereon two different user interfaces. The first user interface 210 includes a set of first keys 12 and the second user interface 220 includes a set of second keys 22, so that when the keyboard 200 is attached to an electronic device 140, as shown in Figures 8c-8d, it
10 turns the electronic device 140 into two different devices with different functions. The keyboard 200 also has a connector 202, which is engaged with a connector 150 on the electronic device 140, as shown in Figure 8b, for conveying signals indicative of information entered by a user using the keys 12 or 22. As shown in Figure 8b, the electronic device 140 has a device body 142, which has mounting grooves 152 to secure
15 the keyboard 200 when the keyboard is attached to the device body 140. The device body 142 has an upper side 144 facing the user when the user enters information in the electronic device 140. When the keyboard 200 is attached to the device body 142, either the first user interface 210 is exposed on the upper side 144 of the device body 142, as shown in Figure 8c, or the second user interface 220 is exposed on the upper side 144, as
20 shown in Figure 8d. It is possible that the electronic device 140 has a display 106 to show information to the user, and a set of common keys 146, which can be used for entering information or for controlling the electronic device 140 regardless of which user interface 210, 220 is exposed.

Figures 9a shows an exemplary layout of the user interface 210, which can be used
25 as a phone keypad. Figure 9b shows an exemplary layout of the user interface 220, which can be used as a keypad for playing electronic games on the electronic device 140. Not only can the user change the keypad of a particular keyboard by switching the sides of the keyboard, the user can user another keyboard on the same electronic device 140 as well. Thus, the double-sided keyboard 200 is used as an insert or an accessory to the device body 142 to change the functions of the electronic device 140. For example, the user can
30

insert another double-sided keyboard 300, as shown in Figures 10a and 10b, onto the same device body 142. As shown in Figures 10a and 10b, the double-sided keyboard 300 has a plurality of keys 12 on one side and a touch pad 310 on the other side. When the keyboard 300 is inserted onto the device body 142 with the touch pad 310 exposed to the user, as shown in Figure 10c, the user can make drawings or control the electronic device 140'.

The double-sided keyboard 300 comprises a dome-sheet or activation mat 40 and a circuit board 50 between the keys 12 and the touch pad 310, as shown in Figure 10a. The touch pad 310 can be made of an EMFI film (electromechanical film), for example, to allow the user to enter information in the electronic device 140'. As it is known, an electromechanical film is a biaxially oriented plastic film containing a permanent electrical charge. When the film is deflected by touching, it produces an electrical signal. Thus, with electrodes disposed on the film surfaces to convey electrical signals to a connector, the electromechanical film can be used as a touch sensor. As with the keyboard 200, as shown in Figures 3a-4c, the user can press one or more keys 12 to cause the corresponding electrically conductive sections 44 to make electrical contact with the circuit board 50 in order to enter information in the electronic device 140'. The user can also enter information in the electronic device 140' by using a finger, a pen or a stylus to assert pressure on different locations on the touch pad 310. It is understood that the electrodes (not shown) on the touch pad are connected to a connector 202 (Figures 8a) for providing touch pad signals to the device body 142 (Figure 8b).

Alternatively, the dome-sheet 40 is not actually for making electrical contact with a circuit board in the double-sided keyboard. As shown in Figure 10b, the dome sheet 40' can be made of an electrically non-conductive material just to give a tactile feel when the user presses the keys 12. The actual sensing of the pressing of the keys 12 is carried out by the touch pad 310. The touch pad 310 in Figure 10b detects the pressure on either side of the touch pad: the pressure on one side is asserted directly by a finger or a pen as with the touch pad in Figure 10a, whereas the pressure on the other side is asserted by the pressing of the keys 12.

It is also possible to replace the circuit board 50, as shown in Figures 3a-4c, with a

touch pad **310**. Furthermore, the connector **202** of the keyboard **200** and the connector **150** on the device body **142** (Figures 8a and 8b) can be a serial interface with a small number of pins symmetrically arranged so that the keyboard **200** can fit both ways to the device body **142**. A processor (not shown) in the device body **142** can recognize whether 5 the first user interface **210** or the second user interface **220** is exposed for information entering. It is also possible to use a resistive strip on the keyboard **200** and a number of pins on the device body **142** to input data from the keyboard **200** to the device body **142**. The present invention uses active domes **44** (electrically conducting) or passive domes (electrically non-conducting) to facilitate information entering using a double-sided 10 keyboard **200, 300**. The conveying of entered information from a removable keyboard **300** to a device body **142** can be carried out by connectors, resistive strips or any other means. No particular method of conveying information is preferred.

Thus, although the invention has been described with respect to a preferred embodiment thereof, it will be understood by those skilled in the art that the foregoing 15 and various other changes, omissions and deviations in the form and detail thereof may be made without departing from the spirit and scope of this invention.